

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by

KATHLEEN

BLISS

PACIFIC SCHOOL

24th November, 1948

THE RETURN of Mr. Truman to the White House has given professional commentators enough to think and write about for many months to come. The general view expressed in this country is one of satisfaction that American policy in Europe will remain in tried hands. Within America the Democratic party has shaken itself free from the reactionary element in its supporters in the deep South, and has emerged, not as the supporters of the man of the hour (as to a large extent

it was when it first sent Roosevelt to the White House), but as a broadly based national party with a domestic policy committed—though little enough was said in the election campaign to give content to the committal—to the principles of the New Deal. Credit for a trenchantly worded criticism of its political opponents goes solely to Mr. Truman. American labour has said its say about Republican activity in Congress in general, and the Taft-Hartley Act in particular, not by means of strikes, protests and economic action, but through the machinery of politics. Farmers of the middle west have, for the first time on record, voted Democrat in time of peace. The American electorate has not been stampeded by high power advertisement, by the suggestion that a change is a good thing, nor by the political ineptitude of Mr. Truman's chicken-livered supporters. What this election means in terms of political maturity and

NEWS-LETTER

OPINION POLLS

THE BRITISH COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES

A FAITH FROM LIFE

SUPPLEMENT

CHRISTIANS AND MODERN
WAR

A STATEMENT TO THE
BRITISH COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES

By

J. H. OLDHAM

liberal policy within America may ultimately have an indirect influence in the world as important as Mr. Marshall's foreign policy. Those who in this country have talked of the political immaturity of the United States will have to think again.

The defeat of Dr. Gallup and the professional election forecasters provided uproarious election entertainment. As a result a serious discussion of the value of such polls has begun. The suggestion comes more and more frequently from Government and other quarters in this country that policy in many matters ought to take account of public opinion by means of such enquiries, so this discussion is all to the good. All opinion polls are based on the assumption that a sample gives, with a slight margin of error, an accurate measure of the whole. The rules for obtaining a representative sample are by now known, and if Dr. Gallup & Co. failed here they need not have done. But other assumptions are also made: that the people who give their opinions will actually go to the polling booth, and that when they get there they will vote as they said. The American voters let Dr. Gallup down very badly here; many people did not vote (the total poll was abnormally small); many others voted contrary to expectation. It has even been suggested that the forecasters themselves turned the scale by sparing many Republican supporters the trouble of going to vote for a foregone conclusion and encouraging others to try at least to reduce Mr. Dewey's majority. Be that as it may, one conclusion is worth drawing from the debate—that an expression of opinion which carries with it an element of responsibility for the result is a far better indication of how people really think than one which does not. Those who give their opinions to a newspaperman forget all about it: those who vote at elections have to live with the results for the next five years. Voters may take their responsibilities too lightly, but the American elections are a salutary reminder that a vote is not the same thing as an opinion. The determination to keep the vote as an election of representatives to the exercise of power and prevent it from being thought of as an expression of opinion has been

one of the main reasons why British political thought has been against the use of the plebiscite. Dr. Gallup's defeat has done the institution of the vote a good service.

But, it may be argued, the opinion poll is open to objections which cannot be held against a different kind of popular survey, that which seeks to find what people actually do, and to base some aspect of policy upon these facts. Here a different kind of difficulty is found. People do not always tell the truth, and they lie for extraordinary reasons. With a view to discovering how many baths should be provided in some new flats, a number of London housewives selected at random were asked how often they and the members of their household had a bath; when the answers were added up it appeared that far more baths are taken in London than the Metropolitan Water Board does or could possibly provide water for. Godliness as well as cleanliness suffers from the same imaginative exaggeration, and it is the experience of Mass-Observation and of the B.B.C.'s Listener Research that when they ask people in a locality how many of them went to Church last Sunday the total is always nearly double the number of persons actually present in the Churches on that day. Why? Because people want to make some kind of adjustment of what they do to what they intend to do, or think they ought to do, or think that others think they ought to do. One of the fundamental objections to the Kinsey Report on the *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (see C.N-L. No. 317) is that the figures it produced tend to make people feel that such behaviour is normal, and to induce a reluctance to admit to another type of behaviour.

The frightful warnings in the Old Testament against numbering the people fall strangely on our ears as a part of primitive taboo. But behind them is a profound truth. Although facts of a very great social value can unquestionably be elicited by the methods of the competent statistician using the method of the scientifically tested sample, there are truths about men and women which they believe to be the *real* truth about themselves which cannot be known by counting, and they resist, often by curious methods and for unfathomable reasons, attempts to count and pigeon-hole

them. There is a further resentment against giving information based on a fear that, innocent in its beginnings, it may lead to everything about you being known and card-indexed, ready for less innocent purposes later on. There may even be some causal connection between the deadening feeling that you can never live down your I.Q., your carefully preserved school record, all that is known about you in Army papers and on your health card, and the almost universal prevalence of gambling, where your luck is the same whoever you are, whatever your intelligence, your past or your heredity.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

It is not possible in the small limits of the News-Letter to make any attempt to summarize the two-day discussions in the autumn meeting of the British Council of Churches, and it is our normal practice to leave reporting of this kind to journals with larger space. The setting up of this Council in 1942 was the final stage in a process of amalgamating various interdenominational bodies, giving them one secretariat and a short and pointed title. There followed a period in which, with limited resources of money and staff, the Council tried to do many of the things which the previous organizations had done and to add to them new enterprises. The more it did the more there was to criticize. Eighteen months ago the Council was in deep water financially and was without a General Secretary. But by this time it had become clear that it was unthinkable that the Council should go out of existence and leave the Churches without an organ of co-operation. More than this negative conclusion, there was evidence that, though some of the Council's efforts were of doubtful value and some of its meetings were discursive and lacking in a clear sense of direction, many useful tasks had been done. The leaders of the Churches and of some of the departments of the Churches were also beginning to find a regular means of communication valuable. Two important principles of ecumenical work have gradually established themselves (and their establishment owes much to their constant practice by the new General Secretary in his first

year of office): first that a Council of Churches stands or falls by its actual usefulness to the Churches, and, secondly, that the best way of making itself of use is to take up what are the actual concerns of the Churches and enrich them by an ecumenical understanding, rather than to invent lines of study and action interesting enough in themselves but remote from the on-going work of the co-operating denominations.

The Council this year enters a new and, in many respects, more difficult stage with the creation of the World Council of Churches. The World Council is based upon the principle that each member Church has direct access to the World Council. Neither national groups of Churches nor confessional groups of Churches are, as such, members of the World Council. This is because it is the individual Church which is the autonomous unit with power to take action. As things were left at Amsterdam, national Councils of Churches in various countries stood off the lines of communication between the individual Churches and the World Council of Churches. The Central Committee of the World Council, meeting shortly after Amsterdam, took this matter up, and, after paying tribute to the work done by various national Councils in helping to promote the formation of the World Council, invited these regional and national Councils to co-operate with the World Council by acting as the instigators of ecumenical activity within their borders. In British terms this means that, to save us from the confusion of having both a British Council of Churches and a World Council of Churches (British Branch), it becomes the business of the British Council of Churches in consultation with the staff at Geneva to promote ecumenical activity in Britain. All this is very far from simple, as became clear in a day's discussion at the autumn meeting of the British Council of Churches early in November. It would be a grave set-back to a genuine ecumenical movement if that movement assumed in people's minds the shape of a pyramid, with the initiatives and even perhaps the operation of the Holy Spirit taking place at the apex and being handed down through a series of channels, most of them nearly entirely clerical, to the local Churches which form the ground base.

In the next few months there will be follow-up meetings of Amsterdam in many places in the country, and an Exhibition describing in pictures the origin and activity of the World Council of Churches has been prepared to give visual assistance.¹ At a later date, the film taken at Amsterdam by the J. Arthur Rank organization will be ready for showing. But although such local meetings may be well attended and enthusiastic, they are bound to be followed by disappointment if they only tell people about Amsterdam and exhort them to local ecumenical action. Some very good advice was given in a speech to the British Council of Churches by Canon Ambrose Reeves, Rector of Liverpool, who is one of the Anglican members of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. He said he hoped that in all the follow-up of Amsterdam an attempt would be made to fasten the main attention on the substance of Amsterdam, which is to be found in the work of the Sections. All the Reports, as he pointed out, need interpretation, but every one of them contains good substance which will help to counteract the almost inevitable tendency of the content of ecumenicism to grow thinner as it gets nearer the periphery.

There was no time at the November meeting to discuss a little paper put out by the Secretary, the contents of which relate to what Canon Reeves was saying. At every Council meeting it is reported that a certain number of new local Councils of Churches have been formed and have sought affiliation with the British Council of Churches, and the grand total of such local Councils is given. It now stands at one hundred and forty-four. These local Councils pay a small annual subscription (some, in fact, contribute generously to the Council's funds) and receive the bulletin, *The Church in the World*.² Very little is known of the activities of these local Councils of Churches. Two-thirds of them have not been heard from during the current year, and of these sixty-eight have not been heard of since 1946. This does not necessarily mean that local Councils are in diffi-

¹ Loaned free, except for carriage charges; particulars from The British Council of Churches, 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. 1.

² Free to associate members of the British Council of Churches paying a membership fee of not less than 5s. a year.

culties and there might indeed be no cause for concern, but for the fact that individual members of the British Council of Churches know of local Councils which, having started with considerable fervour, exist now only on paper.

The amount of local ecumenical work going on in the country cannot be assessed by counting the number of local Councils of Churches, important as they are. Sometimes a single congregation can change the atmosphere of the religious life of a town by the way in which it seeks means of communication with other congregations. Often it is in the secular activities of a place that the strength of the ecumenical movement can be felt: a director of education may have a better idea of whether Christians in the place really love one another than the rector has, and the degree to which the Churches genuinely interpenetrate and influence the whole life of a place is a more important touchstone of a living faith than the success of organized efforts, meetings and campaigns. It would be little short of a tragedy if we looked for results from Amsterdam in terms of fresh organization for ecumenical activity. A widespread awakening to a sense of the presence and participation of other Christians in what each congregation and each Christian family is doing in the ordinary course of Christian obedience, is far more to be desired.

A FAITH FROM LIFE

A young and very able theological lecturer in a German University, after being nine times wounded on the Russian front, was captured in 1944. After four years of labour in Russia, he came back to Germany, and on his return wrote a letter to a few intimate friends. It was not written with any eye to publication, but we have permission to publish a part of it, which reads as follows:—

“ In the days before the war we thought we had grasped the meaning of Christianity, we believed we were in the way of, or had even achieved, our theological justification in the struggle of the Confessional Church for freedom to preach the Gospel. But then came the time of real testing, in the face of death, the hour of great loneliness and final dereliction in which one suddenly saw one's Christianity

break down as a creed and as a system ; in which one was able only to pray, and to cry ' My God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ' Then, like a diagram, the Cross suddenly appeared before the eyes, the forsaken heart clung to it and went forward, theology cast aside, into the yawning void ahead. But just such terrible times of apparent dereliction and abandonment prove, in retrospect, to have been the fruitful times of the immediate presence of the Lord. The diagram was a true symbol. In it, the whole Gospel and achievement of Jesus Christ were made one ; it was the outward sign of the inwardly sustaining and compelling power of the Lord. And the heart of the Christian Gospel, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, death and life, darkness and light, denial and affirmation, the joyful message of the *via crucis*, was no longer a matter of mere history ; it took place in the present, gave us joy in affliction, freedom in the toils of slavery, and hope when all ways of escape seemed barred.

" It was a path from experience that was ' notional ' to experience that was ' real ' , from a studied system of belief to a living way, from speaking about Jesus of Nazareth to bearing witness to the presence of the Lord. For me personally much that had appeared self-evident became highly questionable in these years in which I had to work as a farm hand, builder's labourer, woodcutter, gravel-pit labourer, in the ' Kolchosen ' , and in urban factories. The uncertainty began with the Self, and one shuddered at the potentialities of one's own heart when its social casing has been torn away, when it is possessed by a constant lurking greed born of years of hunger. When it is a matter of food the outer wrappings of the self fall away, strength of character crumbles, the intellectual life is shown up as an illusion and a deceit ; yes, the devil that lurks deep in the heart of man makes its unbidden appearance. Indeed, this self-knowledge, wrung out of experience, is the beginning of the road ; it becomes for man the foundation of his encounter with the glad tidings of forgiveness in Jesus Christ, and for another the source of deep contempt for mankind. Man learns to know himself

from within. He cannot shirk this self-knowledge, and in evaluating and interpreting it lies the only choice he is able to make—that of being true or false to himself.

“ ‘Christ needs no lecturers but only disciples.’ This, or a similarly phrased saying of Kierkegaard’s, often rang accusingly in my ears. It was not only the anxiously guarded Self that was called in question, but the whole life and work of the theological lecturer who in the act of lecturing was all too ready to take flight from Christ, albeit unconsciously.

“ Under such daily burdens and among such reflections prayer was made new for us. We learned chiefly the prayer of expectant silence in which it was not we but God who spoke, in which it was not so much that we accomplished something but rather that we found an answer in the fact of God overcoming us. Prayer was transformed into conversation ; from supplicants we became listeners and followers ; the demands which God made upon us in the silence and the merciful words granted at the same time for our comfort became the essential elements of our wrestling.

“ But even this was not the only thing that made prayer a source of new strength in our weakness. In the discipleship demanded of us in practical life the whole course of the day took on the character of a prayerful walking in the sight of God. And still this prayerful walking was a struggle. The daily renewed resolutions, genuine though they were, proved too weak. The crisis of faith which had seemed to be overcome suddenly became acute once more. The struggle against sin, faithlessness, disobedience and resistance to God became, I might almost say, a metaphysical wrestling in which the satanic within us was confessed in prayer and laid before the power that is the Lord’s and not ours. And thus in the end we were guided to the point where we were allowed to affirm, humbly as well as thankfully, ‘Where I am weak, there I am strong’.”

Kathleen Bliss

CHRISTIANS AND MODERN WAR

The British Council of Churches in October, 1945, appointed a Commission on the Era of Atomic Power. The Report of the Commission was published in May, 1946, and was sent to the Churches represented in the British Council of Churches for consideration and comment. Replies have been received from the following Churches or commissions or committees appointed by them :

"The Church and the Atom". Report of a Commission appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York at the request of the Church Assembly. (S.P.C.K. 4s.)

Supplementary Report of the Committee on Church and Nation to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1946. (Printed.)

Report of the Committee on Church and Nation to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1947. (Printed.)

Report by the Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland. (Printed.)

Statement by the Baptist Union of England and Wales. (Typescript.)

Resolution of the Social Service Committee of the Baptist Union of Scotland. (Printed.)

Report of a Sub-Committee set up by the General Purposes Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. (Typescript.)

Report of a Commission appointed by the Methodist Church and adopted by the Methodist Conference, 1947. (Printed.)

Reply to the British Council of Churches from the Society of Friends. (Printed.)

Interim comment of the Council of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. (Typescript.)

At the meeting of the British Council of Churches this month Dr. J. H. Oldham, the chairman of the Commission on the Era of Atomic Power, made the following report. The Council asked that it should be printed without delay and the editor gladly undertook to publish it as a Supplement to the C.N-L.

THE REPORTS from the different Churches, a list of which you have in your hands, contain much valuable material and carry further in important ways the discussion initiated by the Report of the Commission of the British Council of Churches. The

questions, theological and practical, raised in the various reports are so many and varied that it is out of the question to cover the whole range in a brief statement. If I had an hour, I should be quite ready to discuss *The Church and The Atom* and some of the important issues raised in the other reports. But in the time at my disposal the only thing open to me would seem to be to try, in the light of these reports, of other things that have been written, and of the recent discussions at Amsterdam, to indicate what appear to be the crucial issues that have emerged in regard to the central question of the Christian attitude to modern war. I can in this matter speak only for myself. It has been impossible in view of the commitments of its members to call the Commission together, or to duplicate and transmit to them all the documents and try to arrive by correspondence at a common mind on a subject of endless complexity. I can, therefore, only offer you the personal opinion of one who has at least tried to follow closely the discussions of the last two or three years.

I do not believe that in this matter intellectual argument will get us any further. Pretty well everything that can be said on one side or the other has been said. We have slowly to feel our way through the darkness to a new understanding, which is born of a change of consciousness at a profounder level than the intellectual. Perhaps the beginnings of that change are already taking place. I have the impression that there are among both pacifists and non-pacifists some who find in a common awareness of the need for a new outlook on things, and in a common search for it, a bond with one another stronger than the conclusions which at a more intellectual level they share with their fellow-pacifists or fellow-non-pacifists.

It is from that point of view that I approach the question whether we can see—perhaps from a fresh angle—what the fundamental problems are. Four questions seem to stand out with growing clearness as of far-reaching and decisive importance.

THE NATURE OF MODERN WAR

One important difference, which is also to some extent new,—a difference in quality of feeling rather than in conclusive argument—is the difference between those, on the one hand, who make no radical distinction between modern war and the wars of

the past, who consider the Christian tradition regarding a just war to be still relevant to modern warfare, and who cherish the hope that it is still possible to wage war with limited aims and to impose restraints on its conduct, and those, on the other hand, who see in the development of modern methods of mass destruction, and in the total war which seems inseparable from them, the emergence of something fundamentally new in human history. Indiscriminate massacre is sheer inhumanity unredeemed by any saving grace. To blot out of existence by a single bomb 60,000 persons, to reduce the cities of men to a heap of rubble, to extinguish over wide areas all human, animal and plant life by bacteriological warfare or radio-active particles—these things are a complete denial of every human value, an intolerable affront to man's humanity. That is the first point to which the Christian mind must address itself in seeking for new light.

What, when all is said, is the Church in the world for? Surely to witness above all else to the divine compassion. What we are confronted with to-day is the supreme, explicit, unqualified denial of compassion. If the Church is silent in the face of this, is it not the complete betrayal of its mission? Of course, on deeper reflection we find that even the overriding claim of compassion is not as clear and unambiguous as it seems at first sight. There are not only the horrors of Hiroshima and Hamburg but the horrors of concentration and labour camps and of the secret police. May not an all-embracing compassion have in certain circumstances to accept the former evils as the only means of ridding the world of more enduring and more permanently degrading evils? But from the point of view from which I am now speaking that does not really hold. Whatever may be true in the sphere of rational argument, in this particular historical situation the supreme need, the decisive consideration, is that mankind should preserve and recover its humanity. Only by an uncalculating, passionate revolt of the human spirit against the evil, hideous thing that is dragging it down to the sub-human, bestial level can humanity hope to survive. There is no room for parley; no place for half-measures. There is only one thing open to us—an uncompromising refusal to have any part in indiscriminate massacre, in large-scale senseless destruction. Is there any choice except to throw off, if we can, the clutches of the foul

fiend that is strangling our humanity, to take a bold leap into the world of freedom, to live henceforth as those dedicated unreservedly to the service of love? And that is, of course, in essence what we have to do. But, if it seems as simple as all that, it is only because in pursuing this train of thought we have been leaving out other aspects of the human situation.

CONSCIENCE IN A COLLECTIVIST SOCIETY

I long to make this leap into freedom, but can I? Or am I bound to my fellow-men in a solidarity that is unbreakable? What if it be true that our modern technical civilization, with the large-scale organization which is its inevitable accompaniment, has brought about a state of things in which, while men remain free to think and feel as they choose—or *may* remain free, since even that freedom is threatened—what they actually *do* is in a greater degree than ever before inescapably determined by what society as a whole does? If the nature of modern weapons compels a fresh consideration of the participation of Christians in war, does not the new type of society which is taking shape compel a fresh consideration of the courses of action satisfying to the Christian conscience that are open to a conscientious objector in a society engaged in total war? That is the second point with which Christian thought must engage itself with a new openness of mind.

THE PREVENTION OF WAR AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Again, we have approached the subject thus far from the standpoint of the individual conscience. That is a standpoint that we can never renounce. But the subject has also to be viewed from the quite different standpoint of the *prevention of war*. Just in proportion as we perceive modern war to be the denial of every human value, it must be our overmastering desire, not primarily that our own hands may remain clean, but that this awful event in the life of mankind should not *happen*.

Now whether war takes place or not depends, not on the integrity of our personal decision as individuals, but on what takes place at the Council of Foreign Ministers and on cabinet decisions taken in Washington, London, Paris and Moscow. Therefore we have to view this matter not only from the point of view of our own conscience but from the point of view, let

us say, of Mr. John Foster Dulles.¹ I take Mr. Dulles as an illustration because he is a Christian who has identified himself deeply with the life of the Churches in America and was at the centre of the deliberations of the Churches at Amsterdam.

The first question I have to ask myself is, Do I believe that it might be right for Mr. Dulles as a Christian to become Secretary of State, if the post were offered him? The answer to that question is not to be given off hand. There may be conditions in which a public office is not one that a Christian can accept. But in the case of America and Mr. Dulles my answer is yes. If I gave another answer, I should be saying in effect that a Christian cannot take part in democratic politics. And, if I were to say that, a great deal of what I understand by Christianity would go by the board.

If Mr. Dulles were to become Secretary of State he would beyond question do everything in his power to prevent war. But he would not, in office, be free simply to exercise his private judgment. He would have to take account of the political forces which had placed him where he was, and of the political, economic and military opinions of those with whom he was associated. And, further, it is, I think, patent to most students of recent political history that a policy of appeasement or weakness is one more likely to provoke than to avoid war.

Suppose, then, that we were to elevate conscientious objection on the part of the individual into a principle of general application, and that the Churches, as some would wish them to do, were to instruct their members to withdraw their support from their Governments in all measures even of self-defence, they would be taking political action—political action of the most momentous kind, action that might defeat the efforts of statesmen to avert war. I am not saying that the Churches ought not to take such action, because I am not here advocating any particular view: I am only saying, what I believe to be a fact, that if they *were* to take such action in the political sphere, it must be with the full knowledge that the effect of such political action, no less than of other courses of political action, might be to plunge mankind into all the horrors and inhumanities of modern war.

¹ This was written before the result of the American Election was known, when a Republican victory was generally anticipated, in which case it was thought that Mr. Dulles might become Secretary of State. But since this possibility was put forward as a purely hypothetical case, the argument is not affected by the result of the Election.

I have made these elementary, and because of their brevity rather crude, remarks in order to direct attention to a fundamental issue in the present religious situation taken as a whole. This is the third crucial question with which the Christian mind has to engage itself. It is the question of the relation of man's responsibility in human affairs to God's responsibility. It is a fundamental issue in the present religious situation because the greatest challenge which Christianity has to face to-day is the emergence on a wider scale than ever before of a way of thinking and feeling which looks on belief in the divine government of the world as incompatible with the dignity, freedom and responsibility of man. Now the dignity, freedom and responsibility of man are Christian ideas, and we can meet the new challenge to our faith only by doing full justice to the truth it is seeking to assert. Suppose that the statesmen who direct foreign policy, whether Christian or non-Christian, taking on their shoulders the burden of political responsibility and working in the only context open to them—the context of armies and navies and atomic weapons—do succeed, as pray God they may succeed, in averting from God's creation the awful fatality of modern war, may not the great and good God, who loves His creation, say to them, "Well done, good and faithful servants," while He looks with a less approving eye on those of us who in the desire not to soil our garments slip out from under the load of real political responsibility. I am trying to do more than repeat a familiar argument. I want to suggest that the Christian attitude to war has to be seen in the light of a new, profound understanding of the religious situation as a whole. If that statement is too brief, as I fear it is, to make my meaning clear, a fuller treatment of the issue will be found in the current Christian News-Letter (C.N-L. No. 323), both in the Letter itself in a comment on the Lambeth Conference statement on the doctrine of man, and in a significant Supplement by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, taking issue with some of the things said by Professor Karl Barth in his address at Amsterdam.

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC

Does the fact that these Christian obligations seem to point in opposite directions mean, then, that the Church has no clear guidance to offer to its members on the Christian attitude to war?

I think that it does, but where we are wrong, perhaps, is in allowing that unduly to disturb us. It may be precisely at this point that we have something new to learn. That there is a demand for such clear guidance is undoubted. But it may be that we have to tell people that that demand is mistaken. This is the fourth crucial point that seems to me to emerge from recent discussions. What if the very essence of the Christian ethic is that it is an "ethic of the situation"; not conformity to abstract principles but a direct response to the living God in the demand which He makes in a concrete situation? Some may hear the call to bear witness to the divine compassion, others to the reality of human responsibility. That does not exclude the possibility that as individuals respond to God, the mind of the Church as a whole may incline in the one direction or the other. While the differences remain, those who truly respond are united to one another by a common loyalty, a common humility and a common dependence on the divine forgiveness.

I have limited myself to the religious issue which for us here is of primary importance. The question of the control of atomic energy opens up questions of wide range and immeasurable difficulty on which it would be futile to embark in the time at our disposal.

In regard to the next steps, it is not practicable to continue the Commission on the Era of Atomic Power in its present form. Nor, even if it were practicable, would it be desirable. We have now in the Commission on International Affairs, set up by the World Council of Churches, a body appointed to deal with questions of this nature. It would be wrong to duplicate machinery. The wise course, therefore, would seem to be to discharge the Commission of the British Council of Churches, and to refer the question of further examination of the issues raised in the Report of the Commission on the Era of Atomic Power and in the reports from the Churches, to the Commission on International Affairs.

Subscriptions—£1 (\$4.00 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year, 10s. 6d. for six months (Great Britain and Ireland only). Single copies, 10d.; reduction for quantities.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 20 BALCOMBE STREET, DORSET SQUARE, LONDON, N.W. 1

Published by the Christian Frontier Trust, Ltd., and printed in Great Britain
by the Church Army Press, Cowley, Oxford.